

MINUTES
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
BOARD OF GOVERNORS
ACADEMIC AND STUDENT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
January 30, 2025

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<https://thefloridachannel.org/videos/10-30-24-florida-board-of-governors-meeting-part-1/>

1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks

Chair Cerio convened the meeting at 9:18 a.m. with the following Governors present: Cerio, Edge, Bell Barnett, Brinkman, Diaz, Frost, Haddock, and Phalin. A quorum was established.

2. Minutes of Committee Meeting

Chair Cerio requested a motion to approve the October 30, 2024, committee meeting minutes. Governor Bell Barnett moved to approve, Governor Diaz seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

3. 2025-26 State University General Education Course Lists

Chair Cerio stated that Florida Statute requires the Board to consider the approval of each state university's general education list for the 2025-2026 Academic Year. Chair Cerio recognized Ms. Emily Sikes, Vice Chancellor for Academic and Student Affairs, to provide an overview of the lists submitted by each university.

Ms. Sikes provided a brief history of general education in Florida. She reported that Florida Statute requires students to complete 36 credit hours of general education for a bachelor's or associate in arts degree, noting that this requirement has been in statute since the 1990s. She stated that the general education core, which was introduced in the early 2010s, ensures consistency and transferability across the Florida College System and State University System. Ms. Sikes explained that the Florida general education statute is a part of the more extensive statute that supports the 2+2 Articulation Agreement, a program that is highly regarded nationally.

Ms. Sikes reported that the general education statute requires students to complete at least five courses of the general education core, which equates to 15 credit hours. She noted that the core courses are standard across the systems. Ms. Sikes explained that the remaining 21 credit hours may be selected from each university's list of general education courses, which may vary by institution.

Ms. Sikes explained that Senate Bill 266 was signed into law in 2023, establishing principles and content standards for general education and introducing a two-phase implementation process. Ms. Sikes reported that the first part of the process required reviewing the general education core, and the second part required the Board of Governors to approve or reject each university's general education course list.

Ms. Sikes reviewed the timeline, which began in the fall of 2023 when college and university faculty members met to review core course options and recommend revisions. The list was presented to the Board of Governors and was approved in November 2023, and the Board regulation was subsequently revised in January 2024. Universities implemented the updated general education core courses beginning in the fall of 2024.

Ms. Sikes reported that the second phase required universities to review institution general education course lists. She noted that universities utilized various methods to evaluate general education courses to decide which courses to retain, revise, or remove. She explained that after this review, each university board of trustees approved the general education list and provided a certification form.

Ms. Sikes acknowledged the collaborative efforts of the Board staff, the Florida College System staff, and the Office of Articulation staff to ensure consistent implementation and alignment across systems. She thanked Chancellor Hebda of the Florida College System and Mr. Shannon Mercer of the Office of Articulation for their collaboration. She noted that Chancellor Rodrigues received the final course lists from the Office of Articulation in December as required in statute and that the final course lists were before the Board for approval.

Ms. Sikes presented the criteria included in section 1007.55, Florida Statutes. She reported that the intent of the statute is in the opening line of section 1007.55, Florida Statutes. This section of the law states the intent is to ensure every undergraduate student graduates as an informed citizen through participation in rigorous courses that promote and preserve the constitutional republic. The coursework must be traditional, historically accurate, and of high quality. General education courses must provide broad foundational knowledge to help students to develop essential intellectual skills and habits.

Ms. Sikes added that institutional accreditation agencies also address general education program requirements. The institutions' current accreditor, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), requires that the general education program ensure breadth of knowledge and that the general education courses do not narrowly focus on skills, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular occupation or

profession. The Higher Learning Commission requires that the institution has a general education program for all of its undergraduate programs that imparts broad knowledge and skills to students.

Ms. Sikes stated that the general education course content must meet the standards of the statute. For applicable courses, instruction must include a background of philosophical foundations of Western civilization and historical documents from the United States. She stated that the statute outlines that courses with a curriculum based on unproven, speculative, or exploratory content may not be designated as general education courses. She emphasized that even though courses may not meet general education requirements, nothing in statute prohibits the universities from offering the courses as electives or program-specific courses.

Ms. Sikes explained that while the criteria for institutional general education lists are outlined in section 1007.55, Florida Statutes, that section of law references that all general education courses must meet specific principles and standards, which is outlined in section 1007.25 Florida Statutes.

These criteria were used to review general education core courses and all general education courses. Ms. Sikes reported that each of the general education courses submitted was identified in one of the five categories: Communication, Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Mathematics. Courses must meet the standards in the identified category outlined in section 1007.25, Florida Statutes.

Ms. Sikes reported that the course lists include the general education category, course prefix, number, title, and credit hours, indicate if it is a core course, and include the course review status. The general education course lists and summary includes the number of universities and colleges offering each course. The lists and summary are included in the meeting materials.

Chair Cerio thanked Commissioner Diaz and the Florida College System for a true partnership and collaboration, noting that the effort is critical to articulation. He commented that work to ensure compliance with the new law started across the System in the spring of 2024. He emphasized that compliance with Florida law is a core responsibility of the Board. Chair Cerio acknowledged that the continued financial support by the Governor and Florida Legislature for the System allows state universities to keep tuition low and provide access to high-quality education. He added that general education had not undergone a comprehensive review in many years and that he is pleased with the result that provides students with options supporting broad foundational knowledge and will ultimately create better-informed citizens for our state.

President Cartwright of the University of Central Florida shared that the university engaged in a transparent and collaborative review over the last year. He thanked the Board staff and university leadership for their commitment to the

process, interpreting the requirements, and reviewing changes.

President Limayem of the University of North Florida shared that in 2022, they began evaluating general education courses. The first review found that many general education courses were no longer offered due to faculty turnover. President Limayem established a team of faculty and students to review courses and commented that a process for periodical review is in place. He commended the Board staff and added that this was an excellent exercise in shared governance.

Governor Diaz highlighted the strong partnership between Florida's college and university systems and stated the intention of acting as one. He noted a joint college and university presidents' meeting and commented that a streamlined process benefits Florida students and provides a pathway that is not overwhelming.

Governor Brinkman, representing Florida's student body presidents, expressed student support for the general education review process.

Chair Cerio called for a motion to approve all 12 state universities' 2025-2026 general education course lists as presented. Commissioner Diaz motioned to approve, Governors Edge and Frost seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

Chair Cerio proposed that since this was the first year of implementation, he recommended allowing universities a two-week window to make technical amendments to the course list. He clarified that a university could add courses to their lists that this Board has approved. Chair Cerio asked for a motion to delegate authority to the Chancellor to approve technical amendments, including any addition of courses to a university list, so long as any courses added have an identical course number, description, and resources used as the courses approved by the Board today. Governor Phalin motioned to approve, Commissioner Diaz seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

4. Academic and Student Affairs Updates

A. Florida Student Association (FSA)

Governor John Brinkman, Chair of the Florida Student Association, provided an update on student activities around the System. He highlighted the planning of a lobbying day formally named 'Rally in Tally' and expressed appreciation for student involvement in the Strategic Plan process.

B. Advisory Council of Faculty Senates (ACFS)

Governor Amanda Phalin, Chair of the Advisory Council of Faculty Senates, highlighted the importance of research for the System and the financial impact that research has on the Florida economy. Governor Phalin thanked Florida faculty for valuable research and contribution to the state and nation.

5. Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Having no further business, Chair Cerio adjourned the meeting at 9:48 a.m.

Tim Cerio, Chair

Mandi Young
Director, Innovation and Strategic Initiatives